

Moses 4. Adam and Eve’s Choice To Partake of the Forbidden Fruit

Moses 4:9. “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”

The Lord has not revealed the nature of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, nor has He elaborated on the specific processes that caused Adam and Eve to become mortal.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) summarized the choice presented to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden:

“The Lord said to Adam, here is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you want to stay here, then you cannot eat of that fruit. If you want to stay here, then I forbid you to eat it. But you may act for yourself, and you may eat of it if you want to. And if you eat it, you will die” (Joseph Fielding Smith, “Fall—Atonement—Resurrection—Sacrament” [address given at LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City, Utah, Jan. 14, 1961], in *Charge to Religious Educators*, 2nd ed. [1982], 124).

The Lord stated, “Thou mayest choose for thyself” (Moses 3:17), indicating that the Fall had to occur as a result of human choice.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“Elohim [our Heavenly Father] certainly could not force innocent parties out of the garden and still be a just God. ...

“... Adam and Eve—and we—knowingly and lovingly absolved God of the responsibility for the ‘thorns and thistles’ of a fallen world that was personally chosen by us, not capriciously imposed by him” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 203, 204).

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency explained:

“For reasons that have not been revealed, this transition, or ‘fall,’ could not happen without a transgression—an exercise of moral agency amounting to a willful breaking of a law (see Moses 6:59). This would be a planned offense, a formality to serve an eternal purpose. ...

“It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a

glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and 'Adam fell that men might be' [2 Nephi 2:25].

"Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve's act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall (see Bruce R. McConkie, "Eve and the Fall," *Woman*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979, pp. 67–68). Joseph Smith taught that it was not a 'sin,' because God had decreed it (see *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980, p. 63). Brigham Young declared, 'We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least' (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:145). Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: 'I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. ... This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin ... for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!' (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56, 1:114–15)" (Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73).

Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"The fall had a twofold direction—downward, yet forward. It brought man into the world and set his feet upon progression's highway" (Orson F. Whitney, in *Cowley and Whitney on Doctrine*, comp. Forace Green [1963], 287).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that there was no death on earth prior to the Fall of Adam and Eve:

McConkie, Bruce R.

"Mortality and procreation and death all had their beginnings with the Fall. ...

"... An infinite Creator, in the primeval day, made the earth and man and all forms of life in such a state that they could fall. This fall involved a change of status. All things were so created that they could fall or change. ...

"... In the primeval and Edenic day all forms of life lived in a higher and different state than now prevails. ... Death and procreation had yet to enter the world" (Bruce R. McConkie, "Christ and the Creation," *Ensign*, June 1982, 9).